



News Release

WISCONSIN ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wisconsin infantry battalion prepares for Iraq mission with intense medical training

*by Capt. Benjamin Buchholz
2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss. — Artillery shakes the earth. Smoke drifts across a darkened battlefield. The sound of a .50-caliber machine gun, loud as a freight-train in a tunnel, makes 19 year-old Private Reece Cooper's hand tremble as he presses his fingers against the white, nearly bloodless flesh of a fellow soldier's arm. Cooper must establish a catheter drip in his buddy's vein. Then he'll treat the other wounds, some of which still squirt blood, so that the soldier can continue to fight or be safely evacuated from the battlefield.

Fortunately, all of this is simulated. The "blood" is really stage blood, the noise and gunfire mere simulation. But the Tactical Combat Casualty Care course, TC³ in Army parlance, was a convincing final event of the three-week block of training that introduced all 19 medics from the Wisconsin National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, to the trauma of real battle.

Led by 1st Lt. Shawn Murphy, the battalion's physician assistant, the medics began their specialized training by completing in only two weeks the entire Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) civilian basic certification, a course that normally requires six months of bi-weekly classes. Not stopping there, they underwent Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) before finishing with the TC³ course.

"The EMT phase started things out fast," Murphy said, "like taking a drink from a fire-hose: CPR, patient assessment (including treatment of life-threatening bleeding), splinting extremities, safely 'packaging' patients with spinal injuries, treating environmental injuries, burns, penetrating trauma, use of oxygen and airway anti-blockage devices like the combi-tube, and even labor and delivery."

Pre-hospital Trauma Life Support is a course designed to improve the chances of survival for trauma patients by teaching medics to rapidly assess and treat life threatening injuries in a "load and go" scenario. The goal is to decrease an EMT's on-site time and ensure that patients reach a surgeon within the most critical first hour after an injury.

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Medical training

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In Murphy's opinion, Tactical Combat Casualty Care course was by far the most realistic and advanced training any of Wisconsin's soldiers have received at Camp Shelby. "TC³ increased the realism. It made us think. Now, the more routine procedures will seem easy and if, God forbid, we end up in a traumatic situation, the pressure will be at least somewhat familiar."

Medics can stop bleeding with tourniquets and new-age clotting materials like Quickclot, perform IVs, administer limited medications like morphine and basic antibiotics, perform chest needle decompression and even surgically open an airway under emergency conditions. All these skills enable their patients to survive until conditions permit medical evacuation to a less austere facility like a brigade-level medical company (think: M*A*S*H).

In order to become a medic a recruit must score very highly on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), the Army's entrance exam. After that medics attend basic training like any other soldier before a very long and difficult advanced individual training (AIT) at Fort Sam Houston in Texas. Medical training in the Army is one of the most valuable skills because it is highly marketable for civilian careers. For more information on becoming a medic in the Wisconsin National Guard contact your local Wisconsin Army National Guard recruiter or call toll-free 1-800-362-7444.

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PHOTO:



FULL-SIZE PHOTO: <http://dma.wi.gov/MediaPublicAffairs/docview.asp?docid=2378>

CUTLINE: Wisconsin Army National Guard Pvt. Reece Cooper, left, administers an intravenous drip to Pfc. Tyler Schussler during training for field medics at Camp Shelby, Miss. Cooper, Appleton, is assigned to Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, and Schussler, Kaukauna, is assigned to the battalion's Company B. *Wisconsin National Guard photo.*

Note to Editors: The Wisconsin Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry is headquartered in Appleton with units in Waupun, Ripon, Green Bay, Fond du Lac and Marinette. The infantry battalion was augmented by soldiers from the Onalaska-based 32nd Engineer Company and from Troop E, 105th Cavalry of Antigo and Merrill.

The battalion was mobilized June 6 and departed Wisconsin June 9 for several months additional training at Camp Shelby, near Hattiesburg, Miss. The unit will deploy overseas in mid-August.

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